

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 TRSE-00 AID-05 /062 W
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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 4227

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PGOV, KU
SUBJECT: KUWAITI NEWSPAPER SUSPENDED FOR ONE WEEK

1. THE GOK SUSPENDED KUWAIT'S OLDEST ENGLISH LANGUAGE DAILY, THE KUWAIT TIMES, FOR ONE WEEK AS OF JULY 28, FOR VIOLATION OF THE PRESS LAW. THE ORDER SUSPENDING THE PAPER APPEARS TO BE BASED UPON AN AMENDMENT TO THE LAW (DECREED IN AUGUST 1976) THAT BANNED PUBLICATIONS WHICH "CLASH WITH THE NATIONAL INTEREST." THE SPECIFIC ARTICLE IN QUESTION APPARENTLY WAS ONE PUBLISHED ON JULY 27, CONCERNING THE EVICTION OF THE NON-KUWAITI TENANTS OF AN APARTMENT HOUSE AND THE REMOVAL OF ALL OF THEIR BELONGINGS BY POLICE. NAMING NAMES, THE ARTICLE REPORTED THAT THE POLICE AND THE TENANTS' LAWYER WERE IN "FULL COMPLICITY" WITH THE WEALTHY KUWAITI LANDLORD. IT ALLEGED THAT THE KUWAITI JUDGE SEIZED OF THE TENANTS' SUIT TO ENJOIN THE EVICTION WAS "AGHAST" AT THE LAWYER'S FAILURE TO DEFEND THE TENANTS' INTEREST. MORE IMPORTANT, CONVEYED THE IMPRESSION THAT KUWAITIS, OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL, HAD GOTTEN TOGETHER IN A SUCCESSFUL AND DISHONEST EFFORT TO CLEAR THE BUILDING SO THAT IT COULD BE DEMOLISHED AND REPLACED BY A HIGHER INCOME BUILDING. SEVERAL OTHER LOCAL DAILIES HAVE GIVEN COVERAGE TO THIS EVICTION, BUT THEIR REPORTING HAD BEEN MORE GENERAL AND HAD NOT NAMED NAMES NOR MADE DIRECT
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ACCUSATIONS.

2. COMMENT: THE GOK'S SENSITIVITY TO PRESS COVERAGE OF A MASS EVICTION IS, OF COURSE, LINKED TO THE PRESENCE OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF TENANTS IN KUWAIT -- ONLY KUWAITIS CAN OWN PROPERTY HERE. THE GOK APPARENTLY RECOGNIZES THAT A POLITICAL DANGER COULD DEVELOP IF A

TENANT MOVEMENT SHOULD EMERGE IN KUWAIT, AS THE RESULT
OF HIGH RENTS IN THIS BOOMING ECONOMY, THE ACLLOUSNESS
OF MOST LANDLORDS AND THE CURRENTLY ALLEGED "COMPLICITY"
OF KUWAITI AUTHORITIES IN THEIR COUNTRYMEN'S TREATMENT
OF FOREIGN TENANTS.
MAESTRONE

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Message Attributes

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